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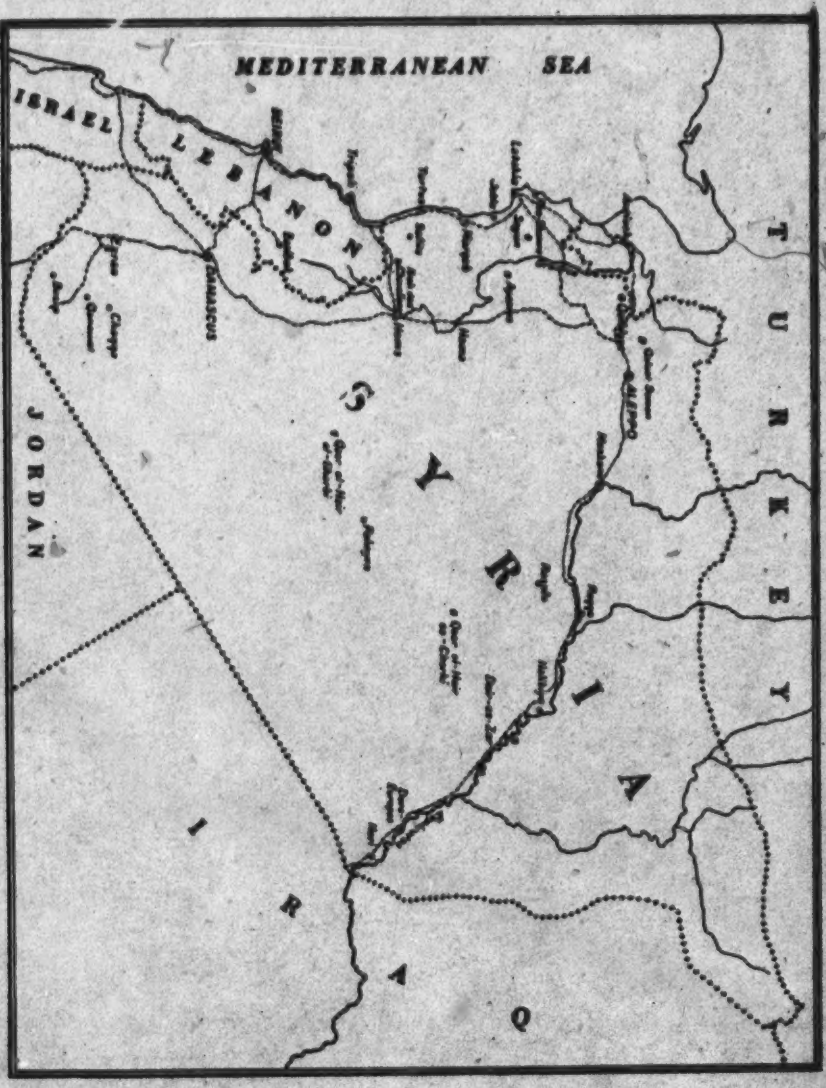
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crescent which (starting from the Iraqi border) comprises the Jezira, the countryside of Aleppo, Homs, and Hama, and the fertile and beautiful Biqaa valley. The cultivation of cotton and cereals is particularly successful in the north-eastern corner of Syria where there has been great general development in the last five or six years. From Homs one road leads south to the Biqaa valley which continues between the two mountain ranges of Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon, past Zahle to the southern border of Lebanon. Farther inland is the road to Damascus which passes to the east of the Anti-Lebanon over the Qalamun plateau. This is mostly barren land, reaching over 2,000 feet; the areas of cultivation usually need more water, but suffer occasionally from bad floods. The oasis of Damascus is known as the Ghouta and there every drop of water in the two rivers is made use of, by an ancient system of canals which follow the contours and provide water lavishly as they gradually lose height. Between Damascus and Jordan lies the Hauran plateau much of which is about 2,000 feet above sea-level; here there is cultivation of cereals but few trees are now left and there is insufficient water to ensure good crops each year.

(4) *The Desert.* To the south and to the east of the Fertile Crescent there spreads a desert that extends southward for over

20: Hourani S-5 (1945) 1947 Syria MDI
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63:Simmons et al G-5 (1941-1961) 1984
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